

Eighteen High School Students Will Compete in 2016 Poetry Out Loud Delaware State Finals



For Immediate Release

**EIGHTEEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL COMPETE IN
2016 POETRY OUT LOUD DELAWARE STATE FINALS**



Students from eighteen Delaware high schools will compete in the *Poetry Out Loud* state finals at the Smyrna Opera House on Tuesday, February 23 at 7 p.m. The event is free and the public is welcome to attend. Paul Weagraff, Director of the Delaware Division of the Arts will greet contestants and give opening remarks. He will be followed by J. Mack Wathen, Chair of Delaware State Arts Council, who will conclude by recognizing the panel of adjudicators.

Each of the eighteen participants will recite three poems that they have selected, studied, and practiced, representing more than 40 different poets including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Langston Hughes, William Ernest Henley, Robert Frost, and Emily Dickinson. The recitations are inspiring, moving,

sometimes humorous, and always engaging. The winner will receive \$200 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC, to compete in the national championship from May 2-4, where \$50,000 in cash prizes and school stipends are awarded.

The 2016 Poetry Out Loud participants are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>
Tori Baker	Brandywine High School
Phoebe Callard	Cape Henlopen High School
Jessica Pigeon	Caravel Academy
Christian Wills	Concord High School
Brandon Dawson	Middletown High School
Rebecca Pereira	Mount Sophia Academy
Natalie Nwanekwu	Newark Charter Jr./Sr. High School
Shannon Murray	Padua Academy
Hannah Sturgis	Polytech High School
Samuel Ogunwande	Red Lion Christian Academy
Jordan McMillan	Sanford School
Dylan Norman	Seaford High School
Abbey Thompson	St. Elizabeth's High School
Mollie Russell	St. Mark's High School
Kana Turley	Tall Oaks Classical School
Jane Krukiel	Ursuline Academy
Samantha Drummond	Wilmington Christian School
Gustavo Silveira	Wilmington Friends School

To learn more about each high school student and their reasons for participating in Poetry Out Loud, please read their biographies [here](#).

The Honorable Nnamdi O. Chukwuocha and Al Mills, the current Delaware Poets Laureate, will serve as the Masters of Ceremonies. Adjudicators include Jim Bourey, Sophia Hanson, Lucas Amillion Mayfield, Maggie Rowe, Marcia Reed, and Jeffrey Santoro. They bring their personal and professional experience as poets, educators, and performing artists to judge the participants on physical presence, voice and articulation, appropriateness of dramatization, level of difficulty, evidence of understanding, overall performance, and accuracy. Delaware State Arts Council member, Tina Betz, will serve as the accuracy judge, ensuring that competitors recite the poems correctly.

About Poetry Out Loud

The Delaware Division of the Arts sponsors the *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest* program in Delaware schools and the state finals. Competition begins at the classroom level in the fall and culminates with the state finals each spring. Eighteen schools and over 2,000 Delaware students participated in the *Poetry Out Loud* program in the current academic year. The *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest* competition is presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. For more details about the partnership and program, see the program overview [here](#).

About the Delaware Division of the Arts

The [Delaware Division of the Arts](#) is an agency of the State of Delaware. Together with its advisory body, the Delaware State Arts Council, the Division administers grants and programs that support arts programming, educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets

of Delaware life. Funding for Division programs is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. For more information about the Delaware Division of the Arts, visit artsdel.org or call 302-577-8278.

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